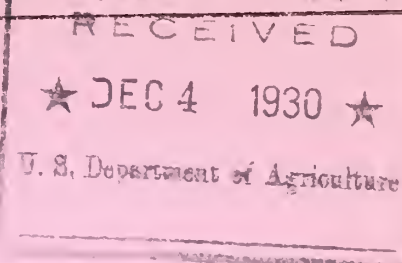


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Housekeeper's Chat.

Thursday, December 4, 1930

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Metamorphosis of a Parlor." Program includes a recipe from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletins available: Radio cook book; Window Curtaining; Floors and Floor Coverings.

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The other day I received a most interesting letter from one of my listeners. It was an account of how she had helped to transform a parlor into a living-room. I do like to get letters of this type.

Would you like me to read it to you? It begins:

Dear Aunt Sammy: I've heard a lot of your programs, on how to feed the children so that they'll grow strong bodies, making over old kitchens, choosing good fabrics, and all the rest. I like what you say, because when I try it out, it works. And now I want to tell you a story, a true story. If you try this out you can make it work, just as I have made your ideas work. This story began with a deep-laid plot. For some time, three of us had been conspiring about a friend's house. No, we didn't wish to burglarize it. Our motives were good, in fact, quite lofty. We just wanted to rearrange the furnishings, in her living room, particularly. In fact, it was not a living room at all. It was a parlor. The old-fashioned furniture, and the rugs and pictures, and almost everything in the room, was lovely, but they had not been placed with any thought of their actual use.

Now of course I don't mean, Aunt Sammy, that the chairs were turned toward the wall, or anything like that. You know, better than I, that chairs can be placed by a table with a shaded lamp so that you are lured to sit down comfortably with a magazine or a bit of darning. Or chairs may be set stiffly on the four corners of a rug, away from everything else, and nobody who doesn't absolutely have to sit down will ever be tempted to use them.

Well, that is just the kind of a room my friend's parlor was. A nice chair sat primly on each corner of the large rug. The piano



occupied the best place in the room, and made you feel that it was a parlor full of piano. An old-fashioned, marble-topped, center table stood plum' in the center of the bay window, leaving room for nothing else, and shutting off light and view. A big easy chair, where my friend sat in the evening, was right between two doors, always in a draft. She threw a shawl around her shoulders every evening, but she never thought of moving her chair.

And the mantel! Aunt Sammy, I almost weep when I think how that mantel looked. There was a beautiful little marble statue, yes, something really exquisite, which my friend had bought on a trip to Italy, and a fine piece of glass -- lovely green Venetian glass -- and a beautiful, carved Florentine frame with a fine copy of a portrait. All very nice, but you could hardly see these lovely things for the paper boxes, and artificial flowers, and nicknacks of one sort and another, which had accumulated for the last three or four Christmases. And pictures of all the new babies in the families, and high school graduates. They were there, too, in a solid row, some flopped over, some standing up straight, but none looking especially comfortable. On the top of the piano were more photographs, and a pile of dog-eared music.

There, do you get a picture of that room, Aunt Sammy? Everything for comfort and beauty, but missing it by a mile.

And how do you think we got a chance to do it over? All because of the piano, which seemed too self-important already. My friend, whom I'm going to call Dr. Jane, is very considerate of her piano. She began it all by asking whether we thought the piano was too near the register. Quick as a flash up jumped one of the three conspirators, who also happened to be a husky young man, and said "Yes, let's change it." The next minute the piano was rolling toward the opposite wall. Then we just had to move a small table and lamp and easy chair, to the place where the piano had been.

"Why, this is better for the piano and for me too," said Dr. Jane, as she settled down in her chair after the move. "I don't feel that draft on the back of my neck, the light is just where I want it, and the room looks larger and nicer. Have you any other changes to suggest?"

Had we! Oh, my! There wasn't much we didn't move in that room now that we had the chance. And even if I do say it "as shouldn't," Aunt Sammy, it looks like a different place.

We shifted the marble-topped table to the side of the bay window, and turned it so that there is room for a big chair beside it, commanding a view of the street, and with light falling from the left, just right for sewing and reading. Over the marble top, which looks so cold and forbidding, we draped a soft, silk cover, one Dr. Jane had laid away in a trunk. And we placed on the table a lamp with a plain, creamy, parchment shade. Between brass book ends we arranged a few books. These books had been on the table, but so placed that only their ends and sides showed,





unless one looked right down on them. We stood them up, and now their titles can be read easily, and the bindings make an attractive combination of colors.

From the mantel, we took ever thing except the little marble statue, the beautiful glass vase, and the portrait in the carved frame. Each of these lovely things can not be appreciated, and they go well together.

On Dr. Jane's table, by her chair, is a well-framed picture of her father. The rest of the miscellaneous assortment of photographs is neatly tucked away, or taken to the bedrooms, the small rug, which was diagonally across the floor, in front of the bay windows, we straightened, parallel with the large rugs. It now helps to make that part of the room look wider -- a very good thing, because the room is rather too long for its width. We rehung the pictures, too, getting them into better light down near the level of the eye. From the top of the piano we took everything. When the piano is played, there is nothing now to vibrate, and to muffle the tone.

Now, Aunt Sammy, if you don't believe we did all this in one evening, just you come and see. Dr. Jane is so pleased, with the passing of her parlor, that she gave me permission to tell you about it. I know she'll let me show you the living room she now has. You may read my letter, if you care to, but please don't read my name.

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That concludes the letter, and I shall not read the name of the writer, nor her home town. If she is listening-in today, I want her to know that I thank her very much for writing to me, and I hope she will write again. People with such good ideas, should not waste them on the desert air.

Everyone does not have such helpful friends at hand as are described in this letter. Sometimes we have to try, as best we can, to find out how our own living-rooms can be rearranged to make them really livable. There are two helpful bulletins written by specialists in the Bureau of Home Economics, which bear on this problem of living-rooms, however.

Take "Floors and Floor Coverings." All sorts of suggestions in that for one of the fundamental features of a room. And "Window Curtaining." My correspondent doesn't say anything about Dr. Jane's curtains, but if they matched the mantel-piece or the marble-topped table, I'm quite sure they could have been simplified to advantage. Naturally these kindly conspirators didn't want to go quite so far with their changes, but in one's own home it's different. By all





means let's think about the windows.

As for the lighting, the furniture, the pictures, and the books,- each one to his taste, as the French say. Let's eliminate what is neither useful nor ornamental. Group together the things that are used together- a reading chair and a reading light near where books are kept, for instance; or a few chairs near enough to the fireplace to permit a cosy fireside talk. Thinking over the uses of the living room helps, doesn't it?

"I've been asked to give the recipe for five-minute cabbage again. Here it is:

Seven ingredients, for Five-Minute Cabbage:

1 1/2 quarts shredded cabbage.	2 1/2 tablespoons flour.
3 cups milk	Salt, and
1 cup cream or rich milk	Pepper
2 1/2 tablespoons butter	

I'll repeat the seven ingredients: (Repeat)

Cook the cabbage for 2 minutes, in the 3 cups of hot milk. Add the cup of cream or rich milk, the blended butter and flour, and the seasoning, and cook rapidly for 3 or 4 minutes. The result is a crisp vegetable, delicate in flavor and color.

Friday: Ironing day conveniences.

